

OITA/OGAP 2018 Accomplishments

Environmental Provisions of the USMCA

On Tuesday, December 11, 2018, Acting Administrator Wheeler signed a trilateral Environmental Cooperation Agreement (ECA) on behalf of the United States. This agreement was negotiated between the United States, Mexico and Canada, in parallel with the USMCA trade agreement, and will come into effect upon ratification of the USMCA. The ECA provides a framework for future environmental cooperation in North America and operationalizes key elements of the environmental chapter of the USMCA, which contains the most comprehensive set of enforceable environmental obligations of any trade agreement to date. The chapter also includes first-time provisions to address pressing environmental issues such as air quality and marine litter, and obligations to combat trafficking in wildlife, timber, and fish. The environmental provisions of the USMCA, along with the ECA, help domestic producers compete on a level playing field.

EPA Press Release for the Agreement on Environmental Cooperation under the USMCA: [[HYPERLINK "https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/united-states-mexico-and-canada-conclude-negotiations-trilateral-agreement"](https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/united-states-mexico-and-canada-conclude-negotiations-trilateral-agreement)]; photos: [[HYPERLINK "https://www.flickr.com/gp/usepagov/1yD441"](https://www.flickr.com/gp/usepagov/1yD441)]

Text of the ECA: [[HYPERLINK "https://www.epa.gov/international-cooperation/commission-environmental-cooperation-cec"](https://www.epa.gov/international-cooperation/commission-environmental-cooperation-cec)]

USMCA: [[HYPERLINK "https://ustr.gov/trade-agreements/free-trade-agreements/united-states-mexico-canada-agreement"](https://ustr.gov/trade-agreements/free-trade-agreements/united-states-mexico-canada-agreement)]

Administrator Wheeler Represents the United States at the G7 Environment Ministers Meeting

Recognizing that we need to work with our neighbors to address transboundary pollution issues such as marine litter, Acting Administrator Wheeler established relationships with his counterparts at the G7 Environment Ministers Meeting (EMM) this year in Halifax, Canada. They discussed a wide range of issues and launched a G7 Innovation Challenge to Address Marine Plastic Litter. The Administrator also raised the importance of G7 leadership on improving clean air and clean water globally and he highlighted EPA's Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) program as a concrete example of potentially replicable models. The Administrator also launched several bilateral work streams with his counterparts including redoubling our cooperation with Canada on a range of border issues and setting up a cooperation framework with the European Commission on air quality, marine litter, resource efficiency, and chemicals management.

[[HYPERLINK "https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/acting-epa-administrator-wheeler-concludes-visit-g7-environmental-ministers-meeting"](https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/acting-epa-administrator-wheeler-concludes-visit-g7-environmental-ministers-meeting)]

Canada's 2018 G7 Presidency: [[HYPERLINK "https://g7.gc.ca/en/"](https://g7.gc.ca/en/)]

Advancing Effective Approaches to Marine Litter

Recognizing the critical need to address the growing global problem of marine litter, EPA stepped up our collaboration with other federal agencies, key countries, and industry and civil society stakeholders to advance practical solutions to stem the flow of trash into the world's oceans. EPA has taken our successful domestic Trash Free Waters approaches to Central American and the Caribbean that leverages action by other partners, worked with Canada and Mexico on a transboundary watershed marine litter program under the trilateral Commission for Environmental Cooperation, and brought our expertise on waste management to UN Expert Group discussions on global policy approaches to marine litter. EPA will continue to increase dialogue with private sector partners on innovative approaches and to forge consensus with other countries in the G7, the G20, APEC, and the Cartagena Convention.

UN General Assembly Recognizes Air Pollution as Major Risk Factor for Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs)

As a result of EPA efforts in coordination with other federal agencies, the United Nations General Assembly acknowledged air pollution as a major risk factor contributing to the nearly 70 percent of premature deaths globally from non-communicable diseases, including from cardiovascular diseases, chronic respiratory diseases and lung cancer. The Political Declaration adopted at the 3rd High Level Meeting on Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases and by the U.N General Assembly (UNGA) October 10, 2018 ([[HYPERLINK "http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/73/2"](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/73/2)]) added air pollution as a fifth major NCD risk factor – along with tobacco use, physical inactivity, harmful use of alcohol and unhealthy diets -- and called for “increased global awareness, action and international cooperation on environmental risk factors, to address the high number of premature deaths from (NCDs) attributed to human exposure to indoor and outdoor air pollution.” EPA reinforced this message at the World Health Organization's 1st Global Conference on Air Pollution and Health in 2018, where WHO acknowledged air pollution as the 2nd largest NCD risk factor ([[HYPERLINK "https://www.who.int/airpollution/events/conference/en/"](https://www.who.int/airpollution/events/conference/en/)]).

Working to Eliminate Lead Paint Globally

In 2018, EPA played a leadership role in supporting the global phase out of lead paint as Chair of the Global Alliance to Eliminate Lead Paint. Today only 71 countries (36.8%) have lead paint laws, but many are now in the process of developing them. EPA worked with governments and industry to help design a project funded by the Global Environment Facility to help countries develop lead paint laws. This fall, Administrator Wheeler reached out to the Government of Israel, where high levels of lead have been found in paint, to encourage the finalization of Israeli lead paint standards. His letter was featured in Israeli media: [[HYPERLINK "https://www.mako.co.il/news-channel2/Channel-2-Newscast-q4_2018/Article-6ec3a7108349761004.htm"](https://www.mako.co.il/news-channel2/Channel-2-Newscast-q4_2018/Article-6ec3a7108349761004.htm)]]. The Alliance also promoted the importance of lead paint laws

during the International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week of Action, and published a report on the global status of lead paint laws: [[HYPERLINK](#)

"<http://www.saicm.org/Portals/12/Documents/EPI/Lead%20Paint/2018-FINAL-Global-Update-19-OCT-2018.pdf>"]. The paint industry also expressed its support for phasing out lead paint:

- [[HYPERLINK "https://issuu.com/dmgeventscg/docs/going_green_october_2018"](https://issuu.com/dmgeventscg/docs/going_green_october_2018)] [[HYPERLINK "https://www.epa.gov/home/exit-epa"](https://www.epa.gov/home/exit-epa) \o "EPA's External Link Disclaimer"] Going Green supplement, *Polymers Paint Colour Journal (PPCJ)* and *Asia Pacific Coatings Journal (APCJ)*, October 23, 2018.
- "[[HYPERLINK "https://www.polymerspaintyournal.com/news/global-lead-week-of-action-calls-for-ban-on-lead-paint"](https://www.polymerspaintyournal.com/news/global-lead-week-of-action-calls-for-ban-on-lead-paint)]," [[HYPERLINK "https://www.epa.gov/home/exit-epa"](https://www.epa.gov/home/exit-epa) \o "EPA's External Link Disclaimer"] *Polymers Paint Color Journal*, October 22, 2018.
- "[[HYPERLINK "https://www.pcimag.com/articles/105205-industry-leader-outlines-how-the-philippines-phased-out-lead-paint"](https://www.pcimag.com/articles/105205-industry-leader-outlines-how-the-philippines-phased-out-lead-paint)]," [[HYPERLINK "https://www.epa.gov/home/exit-epa"](https://www.epa.gov/home/exit-epa) \o "EPA's External Link Disclaimer"] *Paint & Coatings Industry*, September 13, 2018.
- "[[HYPERLINK "https://www.technochops.com/global-lead-week-of-action-calls-for-ban-on-lead-paint/12820/"](https://www.technochops.com/global-lead-week-of-action-calls-for-ban-on-lead-paint/12820/)]," [[HYPERLINK "https://www.epa.gov/home/exit-epa"](https://www.epa.gov/home/exit-epa) \o "EPA's External Link Disclaimer"] *TechnoChops*, October 25, 2018.

Working Globally to Reduce Mercury Pollution

The Second Conference of the Parties (COP2) to the Minamata Convention on Mercury took place November 19-23, 2018. EPA worked with the Department of State to develop and successfully negotiate positions advancing U.S. interests on issues including mercury storage, waste, contaminated sites, and approaches for evaluating the effectiveness of the Convention. Preparations for COP2 included meeting with stakeholders from industry and civil society, and coordination with other Parties including the European Union, Canada and Japan. EPA also plays a leadership role in the Global Mercury Partnership, an independent UNEP voluntary effort that provides sector-based support from governments, private industry and civil society for the goals of the Minamata Convention.

[[HYPERLINK "https://www.epa.gov/international-cooperation/minamata-convention-mercury"](https://www.epa.gov/international-cooperation/minamata-convention-mercury)]

Links to news articles:

- [[HYPERLINK "http://sdg.iisd.org/news/mercury-cop-establishes-secretariat-in-geneva-approves-mou-with-gef/"](http://sdg.iisd.org/news/mercury-cop-establishes-secretariat-in-geneva-approves-mou-with-gef/)]
- [[HYPERLINK "https://weather.com/en-IN/india/pollution/news/2018-11-23-global-meet-address-mercury-emissions-rise"](https://weather.com/en-IN/india/pollution/news/2018-11-23-global-meet-address-mercury-emissions-rise)]